



Meet The Team: Jim Evans

Jim Evans, Transportation Program Manager with the WASO, has been a long-time resident of Washington, D.C. “As a military brat, I was fortunate when we settled in the D.C. area,” said Jim. “My father became a controller at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, and was connected with the Army War College.”

Jim’s family enjoyed special trips and interpretation at all of the area’s Civil War and War of 1812 battlefields. “In Gettysburg, my family followed the entire sequence of the battle. I just couldn’t believe the magnitude and impact of America’s Civil War,” Jim said. “My mom’s family owned a business on Main Street in Fredricksburg which was shelled and destroyed by Union troops during the battle of Fredericksburg. Fortunately the family escaped complete disaster by moving to Virginia’s eastern shore.”

Jim earned his way through college and graduate school working with several county traffic engineering depart-

Jim Evans as many people never see at WASO: relaxed. Why? He’s in Jamaica enjoying a well-earned vacation.



ments. “I did every imaginable traffic study out there, and it fit nicely in to my course schedule,” says Jim. “While I considered doing a number of things, I quickly realized that federal transportation programs had lots of money and steady work. In graduate school I started to focus more on transportation planning.”

Jim was no stranger to transportation infrastructure funding and programs when he arrived at the National Park Service.

“Prior to coming to the NPS, I was the Chief of Transportation Facilities with the District of Columbia for 15 years,” said Jim. “At that time, the nation’s capital was heavily in debt and facing the worst infrastructure crisis in its history.”

Working with groups such as the Federal City Council, Jim and his cohorts developed the largest multi-year infrastructure rehabilitation plan in the District’s history.

“To fund the plan, we fought to establish a Trust Fund to match Federal-Aid Highway funds and secure a stable and reliable means of future funding,” said Jim. “I helped clear the Highway Trust Fund Emergency Act of 1997.”

Jim says that a key in the process was to eliminate the heavy use of general obligation bonds that incurred high debt service payments, converting instead to charging utilities right-of-way excavation and rental fees, and dedicating motor fuel taxes for transportation improvements.



Jim in his more common garb, at a Transportation Research Board (TRB) meeting, presenting on one of his favorite topics: the NPS Transportation Scholars program.

“I handled the transportation capital budget, federal-aid programming, planning, contract schedules, DC Metro’s capital contributions, and transportation financing, making it easy to work with Congress and the congressionally-appointed Financial Control Board to achieve the goal of improving transportation in the nation’s capital.”

Jim says that the basis for his work with the District of Columbia and later the NPS transportation programs came from working with The Urban Institute, a D.C.-based “think tank” that grew out of a nonpartisan blue-ribbon commission created by President Johnson in the mid-60s to analyze problems facing American cities.

At The Urban Institute, Jim was involved with publishing a series of guides for local officials on selecting, prioritizing, and financing infrastructure investments.

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“The fun parts of the Urban Institute work included working with the White House and some of the sharpest minds at the time on restructuring archaic methods of financing, and the execution of an infrastructure plan that turned D.C.’s transportation system back into a world-class system,” Jim said.

Jim’s first encounter in working with the NPS began in the early 1990s when a National Mall Interagency Group for National Mall Road Improvements was established between D.C. and multiple federal agencies to improve all of the roads and bridges to better conditions, regardless of the jurisdiction or controlling agency.

“I joined the National Park Service in May 2000 following a decision by then Deputy Director Jackie Lowey that the NPS headquarters needed transportation professionals to help out the regions and parks with transportation congestion issues,” said Jim.

A Presidential Memorandum and a Memorandum of Un-

derstanding between the Department of the Interior and the Department of Transportation resulted in the creation of the new Alternative Transportation Program.

“At the NPS I became a generalist,” says Jim. “I am fairly knowledgeable about a lot of things associated with transportation. My principal role with the NPS is program management. I have had the opportunity to serve as the program manager for both the Alternative Transportation Program (ATP) and the Transit In Parks Program (TRIP).”

Jim noted that the ATP has now reached \$138 million in project obligations over the last 15 years, and that his work with TRIP since 2006 had help to secure \$110 million out of \$160 million that was competed against by the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Army Corp of Engineers, and the U.S. Forest Service.

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Today, Jim works with a host of transportation related programs and projects, including surface transportation legislation, special projects, program management, policy, the Transportation Scholars program with the National Park Foundation, and the Cultural Resources division on the history of the Park Roads and Parkways Program (PRPP).

“I’m also working with several Call to Action initiatives, congressional visits, the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the new NPS Transportation Handbook, improving our NPS Transportation web site, the Tamiami Trail project, safety grants with the National Park Foundation, and mandatory reports required by the U.S. Department of Transportation.”

Jim has clearly worked with a lot of transportation and infrastructure funding projects over the years, but there are a couple that stand out as favorite projects. “Just after starting with the NPS I was assigned by the Director to the Presidential Council on the Future of Princeville, North Carolina,” Jim said. (This area had recently been devastated by flooding.)

“Working with FEMA and our Atlanta regional office, we were able to secure grants from NC DOT and FHWA. We designed and constructed the Princeville Heritage Trails, restored the historic Town Hall (with an African-American cultural museum), created a park, and made the cover of *Preservation* magazine that summer.” (See the separate project profile on the [nps.gov/transportation/](https://www.nps.gov/transportation/) web site.)

Jim also enjoyed helping with the 450th St. Augustine, Florida Anniversary work led by the DOI Secretary. (Nope, that’s not a typo: settled in September 1565, St. Augustine is the nation’s oldest city.)

Jim was brought in to assist the Federal Transit Administration with a sensitive project issue involving both the DOI Secretary and the congressional chair and majority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure concerning the 450th Anniversary celebration.

Jim enjoyed bringing together the District of Columbia, the Georgia Pacific Foundation, and Federal Highways to complete a pedestrian-interpretive boardwalk-trail within the NPS’ historic Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens, which allowed visitor access to an underserved community of the nation’s capital. He also helped to establish and elevate the importance of a “task force” on the transportation needs in the national parks into a full, permanent Transportation Research Board Committee on Transportation Needs in the Parks and Public Lands.

Finally, Jim has worked hard to resurrect the National Park Foundation’s Transportation Scholars in the Parks program after Ford Motor Company ceased contributing to the program in 2010 following the recession.

For mentors in his work with the National Park Service, Jim needs to look no further than an office down the hallway. “By far, working with my Chief, Mark Hartsoe, has been a great experience, since he was one of the founding fathers of the Park Roads and Parkways Program in the 1980s.” Jim added that he has also benefited from working with his consultant, Bill Wilkinson, of the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership (STPP).

Jim says that, without question, the greatest challenge facing WASO is the struggle to keep adequate funding coming in for transportation in the parks.

“Half of the NPS deferred maintenance backlog involves vitally needed transportation improvements across the nation,” Jim said. “When we transitioned to the latest surface transportation bill, Congress repealed several programs of importance to the NPS, resulting in an annualized loss of more than \$60 million a year.”

When he’s not working with NPS transportation programs and infrastructure, Jim enjoys collecting antiques, and has an abiding love for archeology.

“I volunteer on digs, and try to avoid the ticks the best I can,” Jim said. “I also collect a variety of antiques, including early American stoneware inkwells.”



While he was the Chief of Transportation Facilities with the District, Jim sponsored the two largest archeology digs in the region: one in Anacostia (prehistoric) and the other along Rock Creek Park and the Whitehurst Freeway (both historic and prehistoric).

Rock Creek Park “completely turned around what pre-historians thought we knew about Washington circa 700 A.D.,” said Steven Potter, regional archeologist for the National Capital Region NPS. The Anacostia project known as “Barney Circle” recovered within an area the size of two football fields more than 30,000 artifacts, including stone tools, deer blood, and corn fibers, and evidence of a prehistoric Indian village.